

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 16-17

THE WASHINGTON POST
25 June 1981

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CIA Tolerates Macabre Moonlighting

International terrorism has been proclaimed the No. 1 target of the Reagan administration's foreign policy. Yet our own clandestine services may have contributed to the spread of terrorism.

As I first reported last October, two CIA renegades, Ed Wilson and Frank Terpil, have used the grisly expertise they gained in their undercover work to help such bloodthirsty despots as Libya's Muammar Qaddafi and Uganda's Idi Amin dispose of their opponents. They have also enlisted the services of other former CIA men and Green Berets to train gangs of terrorists.

Most disturbing, the CIA has done nothing to halt this macabre moonlighting and may even have condoned it. There is evidence, for example, that these merchants of death had close contacts with high-level U.S. officials as they planned and executed their terrorist training operations.

In February, the frustrated star witness in the Terpil-Wilson gun-running prosecution, former CIA analyst Kevin P. Mulcahy, approached my associate Dale Van Atta with shocking details of the FBI's bungled investigation of the case.

Mulcahy also talked to Seymour Hersh of The New York Times, whose recent articles have confirmed many of the facts I had reported. From what Mulcahy divulged, it became clear that the Terpil-Wilson case

was being properly pursued only by a pair of courageous investigators for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Richard Pedersen and Richard Wadsworth.

One conclusion the two sleuths reached was that the investigative agencies involved — Customs, BATF and the FBI — were not cooperating. "From the perspective of the current investigation," they wrote in a secret memorandum, "the extent of the problem appears to be much greater than recognized, and is compounded by conflicting agency jurisdictional responsibilities."

Despite the widening ramifications of the Terpil-Wilson case, neither the White House nor congressional intelligence committees seem to feel the need for a special effort to get to the bottom of the case. What's needed may be a special prosecutor, not confined to the narrow limits of indictable offenses but ordered to expose the whole sorry mess.

Here are some of the things that should be explored through a coordinated investigative effort:

- A theft ring has been operating at the supersecret naval weapons facility at China Lake, Calif., where James Bond-type devices are developed for the CIA and other agencies. China Lake employees and ex-employees have been stealing and selling explosives, night vision devices and electronic

gear to Libya, according to secret Justice Department files.

- Terpil and Wilson are "known to bribe U.S. government officials to enhance their businesses," according to secret files that identified two specific cases. Mulcahy hinted that the arms merchants may have bribed members of Congress and bugged Army supply panel meetings.

- A government witness, who had been "less than candid with the FBI" when questioned about allegations that a CIA official accepted payoffs from Wilson, had a change of heart and told investigators he had "disbursed \$8,000... in cash... in the lobby of the Page Building in Vienna, Va." The alleged bribe went to the suspected CIA official and others, the witness testified.

- Another witness told investigators that a "high Department of Energy official" was paid from \$1,000 to \$1,500 a month to help Wilson get lucrative contracts.

- Two months ago, a former Green Beret was accused of attempting to assassinate a Libyan student at Colorado State University. The suspect has been linked to Wilson.

- Mulcahy said that Wilson was behind an earlier unsuccessful attempt to kill a Libyan defector in Washington, and that a professional hit man was given at least \$10,000 as a down payment for the assassination.